



PRESEMITTEILUNG

20-year-old Mihkels wins in Essen and celebrates biggest victory

Nobody really had him on their radar, but in the end he was faster than all the others: In Essen, Madis Mihkels (Intermarché - Circus - Wanty) was stronger than the second-placed Danny van Poppel (Bora - hansgrohe) and Quinten Hermans (Alpecin-Deceuninck) in third place after 173.8 kilometres on stage 3. The 20-year-old is one of the youngest winners of the Deutschland Tour.

*"I was an outsider, but I really believed that I am strong enough in this tough final", the Estonian stage winner said. "With 300 meters to go, the Bora-hansgrohe leadout in front of me was already going full speed. And that's when I realized that I have a lot more in my legs", said **Mihkels**, who has only one stage win in the Tour of Estonia in his professional career so far. "This is undoubtedly my greatest success so far."*

Ilan Van Wilder (Soudal Quick-Step) did not lose any time to his closest rivals and defended the red jersey of the overall leader. *"I tried to get a few more seconds at the bonus sprint, but it didn't work out. Still, it looks good, but I don't want to get too excited. Tomorrow I'll just try to stay out of everything and get through safely."*

Van Wilder's teammate Ethan Vernon, who finished fifth at today's stage, regained the green jersey, which he had already worn on the first two days. Harm Vanhoucke (Lotto Dstny) defended his mountain jersey for another day but can still be caught by Florian Stork (Team dsm-firmenich) tomorrow.

Stork won the first KOM shortly after the start in Arnsberg. After several unsuccessful attacks, a group formed only after. Mattéo Vercher (TotalEnergies) was joined by Juri Hollmann (Movistar Team) and Frank van den Broek (Team dsm-firmenich). The escapees were not allowed more than three minutes by the peloton.

Shortly after the second KOM the trio was caught up. But a little later, 66 kilometers before the finish, a new leading duo around Michael Gogl (Alpecin-Deceuninck) and Fabien Grellier (TotalEnergies) broke away. About 30 kilometers later they were caught up again. Anthony Turgis (TotalEnergies) tried it next. He made it to the final circuit but was swallowed up by the peloton ten kilometers before the end. Then the mass sprint had to decide.